

**Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
Lincoln Collection**

***Bibliography Series***

***New York Herald Assassination Issue, April 15, 1865***

[Revised 1/8/10]

*The New York Herald* of April 15, 1865, provides one of the most famous accounts of the assassination of President Lincoln. Many thousands have been reprinted and sold as mementoes commemorating his death. The editors of the *Herald* published several editions on the 15<sup>th</sup>, reflecting breaking news as it became available.

Original copies have eight numbered pages (except for the 10:00 a.m. edition which had only four pages). Originals are printed on rag paper, which has a fresh off white appearance, as opposed to the reprints which generally appear old and yellowed. Most reprints have two or four unnumbered pages. None of the originals has a picture of Lincoln anywhere in the edition, whereas several reprint editions do—including some that feature a picture of Lincoln prominently on the front page.

For an example of a reprint compared to an original see “Lincoln Assassination Newspapers” in the “Resources” section of the Abraham Lincoln Online website [ <http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/resource/nyherald.htm> ].

The following is text modified from Information Circular 12 created by the Reference Department of the Library of Congress, revised 1972:

The *New York Herald* of Saturday, April 15, 1865, carried a good account of the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln; for this reason it has been reprinted many times.

President Lincoln was shot at about 10:13 p.m., Friday, April 14, 1865, while seated in a box at Ford's Theatre. About the same time Secretary of State Seward, two of his sons, and two others were knifed by an assassin who invaded their home. Lincoln was removed to a house across the street from the theater, where he died at 7:22 a.m. on Saturday morning the 15th.

News of the attacks reached the *New York Herald* by telegraph in time to make the first edition. Several other editions were issued during the day, reporting later developments, Lincoln's death, and the inauguration of Vice-President Andrew Johnson as President.

The several original editions, six columns wide and printed on rag paper, can be distinguished by variations in the arrangement of textual material and captions, especially on page 1. Four editions have been identified; they are categorized by the time of the latest news bulletin, as follows:

2:00 a.m. Regular edition.

8 pages. A one-sentence “Two o'clock a.m.” bulletin appears just above the caption “Press Dispatches” in the third column and “The State Capital” appears near the top of the fourth column of the first page.

3:00 a.m. Special edition.

8 pages. The first, second, and third columns on page one are same as the 2:00 edition. In the fourth column the caption, "The State Capital," has been replaced by "The Latest News" and contains a sub-heading "Secretary Stanton to General Dix, War Department, Washington, April 15—3:00 a.m." "The State Capital" has been moved to the sixth column.

10:00 a.m. Special edition.

4 pages, the inside ones being identical to pages 4, 5, and 8 of the 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. editions and so numbered. The fifth column of the first page is headed "Postscript...Death of the President." This is the first edition with heavy black column lines, which are limited to a portion of the fifth column.

2:00 p.m. Inauguration Edition.

8 pages, pages 2 through 7 being the same as the 2:00 a.m. and the 3:00 a.m. editions. All columns on the first page have heavy lines; captions in the fifth column under "Postscript" are same as in 10:00 a.m. Special Edition, with the addition of a reward notice. The caption "The Rebels" has slipped from the fifth column to the sixth column, displacing other items. The eighth page has been significantly changed by the addition of a bold-faced caption "Extra" in the second column and "Inauguration of ...Johnson" in the fourth column. Inexplicably, the date "Friday, April 14, 1865" appears in the running head on page eight of this edition.

10:00 a.m. "Reward Edition" and a 3:30 p.m. "Special Edition" have also been reported.

Most of the issues of the *New York Herald* for April 15, 1865, now treasured as originals are in fact reprints of very little value. They are usually printed on wood pulp, now rather dark in color and of poor quality. Few are facsimiles of an original edition and nearly all are reprints with extensive rearrangement of text. Most have heavy column lines and consist of two or four unnumbered pages. Some of the reprints have a portrait of President Lincoln, without beard, on the front page; many include large advertisements on the inside pages for such items as Kitchell's Liniment, Smith's Buchu Lythia Pills, Dr. Archambault's Paris Vital Sparks, or Grain-O Coffee.

A few of the reprints include text reproduced from the 2:00 a.m. Regular Edition, but most purport to be an 8:10 a.m. "Mourning Edition," the existence of any original of which has never been proved.\*

\* modified from Eric C. Caren, "The Assassination of Lincoln and the New York Herald of April 15, 1865," *The Rail Splitter: A Journal for the Lincoln Collector*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (April 1995), 6-7.